

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 1 to 7, 10, 12, 14, 16 to 18 and 21 without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, amend Claims 8, 9, 11, 19 and 20, and add new Claims 22 to 25.

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1. to 7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) A laser oscillating apparatus ~~that excites a~~

~~laser gas by an electromagnetic wave and resonates generated plasma light so as to generate laser light, comprising:~~

~~a waveguide comprising a pair of chambers each internally supplied with~~

~~laser gas,~~

~~a laser tube comprising a pair of waveguides which are connected via a slit-~~

~~shaped gap formed along a lengthwise direction of the waveguide,~~

~~wherein laser light is generated by resonating light emitted from plasma that is generated from laser gas excited by electromagnetic waves supplied via the waveguides,~~

~~and~~

~~(wherein the plasma is generated in the slit-shaped gap)~~

~~wherein said waveguide has a slit-shaped gap in a lengthwise direction, and said pair of chambers communicate with each other via the gap,~~

~~and wherein an electromagnetic wave is generated in one of said pair of chambers and is propagated to the other one of said pair of chambers through the gap, to~~

continuously cause plasma light over the entire area along the lengthwise direction where the gap is formed.

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9. (Currently Amended) The laser oscillating apparatus according to claim 8, wherein an end of one of said pair of ~~chambers~~ waveguides is offset from the other one of said pair of ~~chambers~~ waveguides by a predetermined distance.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) The laser oscillating apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the laser gas is supplied in a flow direction ~~orthogonal to a generation~~ direction of laser light and across the gap from one of said pair of waveguides into the other of said pair of waveguides via the slit-shaped gap.

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Previously Presented) The laser oscillating apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the electromagnetic wave is a microwave.

14. (Cancelled)

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15. (Previously Presented) The laser oscillating apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the laser gas is at least one inert gas selected from Kr, Ar, Ne and He or a gaseous mixture of the at least one inert gas and an F₂ gas.

16. to 18. (Cancelled)

19. (Currently Amended) An exposure apparatus comprising:
the a laser oscillating apparatus comprising a laser tube comprising a pair of waveguides which are connected via a slit-shaped gap formed along a lengthwise direction of the waveguides, according to claim 8; said laser oscillating apparatus being a light source that emits illumination light;

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a first optical unit that irradiates a reticle, where a predetermined pattern is formed, with the illumination light from said laser oscillating apparatus; and

a second optical unit that irradiates an irradiated surface with the illumination light via said reticle,

wherein the predetermined pattern on said reticle is projected on said irradiated surface upon exposure of the irradiated surface,

wherein the illumination light comprises laser light generated by resonating light emitted from plasma that is generated from laser gas excited by electromagnetic waves supplied via the waveguides, and

wherein the plasma is generated in the slit-shaped gap.

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20. (Currently Amended) A device fabrication method comprising:
a step of applying a photosensitive material to an irradiated surface;
a step of exposing the irradiated surface coated with the photosensitive material via a predetermined pattern by using the an exposure apparatus comprising a laser oscillating apparatus as a light source that emits illumination light, a first optical unit that irradiates a reticle, having a predetermined pattern formed thereon, with the illumination light from said laser oscillating apparatus, and a second optical unit that irradiates the irradiated surface with the illumination light via said reticle, the laser oscillating apparatus comprising a laser tube comprising a pair of waveguides which are connected by a slit-shaped gap formed along a lengthwise direction of the waveguides, according to claim 19;
and

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a step of developing the photosensitive material exposed via the predetermined pattern,

wherein the predetermined pattern on said reticle is projected on the irradiated surface upon exposure of the irradiated surface,

wherein the illumination light comprises laser light generated by resonating light emitted from plasma that is generated from laser gas excited by electromagnetic waves supplied via the waveguides, and

wherein the plasma is generated in the slit-shaped gap.

21. (Cancelled)

22. (New) The laser oscillating apparatus according to claim 9, wherein

the predetermined distance is $1/4$ of a wavelength of the electromagnetic waves in the waveguide.

23. (New) The laser oscillating apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the electromagnetic waves are supplied to one of the pair of waveguides into the other one of the pair of waveguides via the slit-shaped gap.

24. (New) The laser oscillating apparatus according to claim 8, wherein standing waves are formed by supplying the electromagnetic waves into the pair of waveguides.

25. (New) The laser oscillating apparatus according the claim 24, wherein a phase of the standing waves is shifted by $1/4$ of the wavelength of the supplied electromagnetic waves in the respective waveguides.